



THE HARBOR OF SITKA.

ON THE SHORES
OF
AN INLAND SEA.

BY
JAMES TEACKLE DENNIS.

ILLUSTRATED.

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ON THE SHORES
OF
AN INLAND SEA.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE WING.

AT last I had reached my destination : San Francisco,—its steep hills covered with the magnificent architecture of the Golden State,—its streets thronged with Celestial pigtails and civilized close-cropped heads,—its bay filled with shipping from the far-off (but not so *very* far off, either, I suddenly recollect) Orient, which *should* be the “Solent” here,—had been studied and traversed. The “Golden Gate” had begun to tarnish a little, the Cliff House and Seal Rocks were hardly worth a fifteenth visit, and the restless spirit that has invaded living beings, from protoplasmal flea to

thoughtful man, began to yearn for fresh sights and sounds. Where could I now turn—toward what lands? Many places beckoned: the Yosemite, Hawaii (Liliuokalani would have received and welcomed me, had I gone there, but I did not), Alaska—yes, at that word my heart leaped. I *would* go to Alaska. I was a little uncertain whether the “Si-wash” would prove to be a man or some sort of an animal; totem-poles as articles of religious faith were something with which I had no experience; and while Utah had prepared me for polygamy, I had, as yet, no close contact with a religion of polyandry. It took just five seconds by the watch to make up my mind, and the next step was to secure my passage. That was by no means a hard task; the season was nearly over, and I had no trouble. So within three days I found myself comfortably ensconced in an excellent state-room on the steamer Umatilla, speeding swiftly through the Golden Gate and heading toward the Pacific. Three days of steaming, with occasional glimpses of the coast,—Mendocino, with green fields breaking into yellow sands along its rugged, rolling slopes; the Columbia River, muddying with its turbid waters even the deep

azure of the ocean for a dozen miles away from its mouth,—and the morning dawned to find us at Victoria, B. C. We were there only a few hours,—just time enough to visit the long, low government buildings and the business portion of the town,—and then steamed to Port Townsend, our last stop in the United States. Port Townsend has a street-railway,—at least the tracks are there,—and it is rumored that once every hour the car makes a trip. Of course, at such long intervals, it would be a small waste of time to ask your friend, to whom you are chatting on the corner, to “wait for the next car;” he would grow hoary-headed while waiting, and would then have to be identified, when he reached home. So the car jogs along the even tenor of its way, unmindful whether the passengers take it or walk; and as the “Port” is very tiny, that latter alternative does not seem to incommode any one.

From the hills above the town there is a magnificent view over Puget Sound and down toward Seattle and Tacoma,—that is to say, the view is *there*, if you can only penetrate the vast volumes of smoke which roll down from the many fires among the forest-clad hills that encircle Puget

Sound like strings of emeralds about a huge sapphire.

One entertaining feature of Port Townsend is the "Poodle Dog,"—a little restaurant where the best of Puget Sound oysters are obtainable: some persons object to them and call them "coppery" in taste, but to me they were most delicious. When you come to settle for them, you may find, however, that terrapin and canvas-back would be a cheap commodity by comparison. Here, too, we leave the Umatilla, which runs to Puget Sound ports, and change to the City of Topeka. She arrived about nine P.M., and I immediately secured my room—a large, comfortable one just forward of the main saloon entrance—and retired.

The next morning found us again at Victoria; and the military band at Esquimalt, just across the harbor, combined with the crack of rifles at target practice, played an accompaniment to our breakfast. We discharged our freight (and one of the crew, for being unruly) and then steamed swiftly through the Gulf of Georgia, the United States a dim, shadowy outline to the east, and the green hills of Vancouver rolling between us and the

greener Pacific to the west. Passengers on excursion steamers like the City of Topeka are seldom ceremonious, and very soon we felt like old friends. And as for the jolly, red-bearded captain, the entertaining pilot, and little "McGinty," our thoughtful steward,—had there been no other



VIEW NEAR NANAIMO.

individuals on board, they alone would have been equal to the emergency of the case.

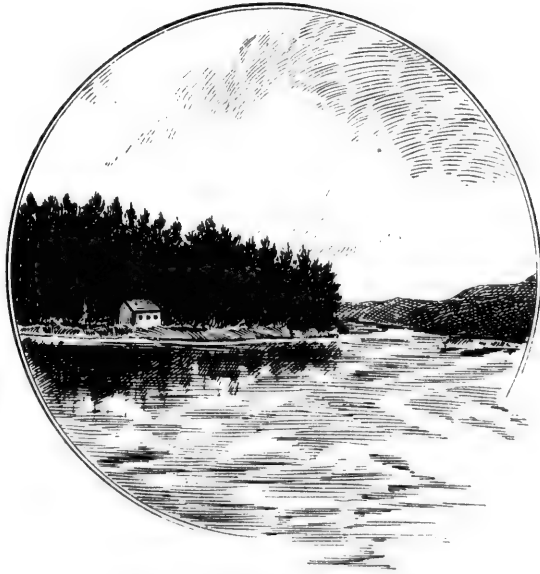
So the night fell, and with the next day noon we had a glimpse of Nanaimo, and by four P.M. dropped anchor in its coaling harbor, about ten

miles north of the city, where we lay in close proximity to a British war-ship, whose grim cannon looked rather gruesome and altogether dangerous.

Of course everybody went ashore, just to come to "close quarters" with the gigantic pines towering up into the blue for thrice fifty feet; just to gaze across the panorama of sea and mountain, glazed into a dim, indefinable mistiness by the sunset shadows; just to stoop down and pull great bunches of "sweet clover," which is not clover at all, or any variety of it, but an herb which somewhat resembles the plantain or mullein of our own fields, and from which the perfume "new-mown hay" is derived.

Night, swift in this region, found us still coal-ing; but by ten P.M. it was all aboard, and we started in earnest for our "latest acquisition." The next morning found us in "Discovery Passage," though what "discovery" was made there is untold. Probably the fact that the first tourist who entered it came out alive had something to do with the name, for the channel is as winding, tortuous, and twisted as the methods of a political juggler; but the scenery is magnificent. We steam under

the shadows of overhanging mountains, rounded into exquisite regularity by the weather, that sharp chisel of the sculptor Time, and covered with densest foliage, through which occasionally comes the gleam of a cleared field or a little house nestling close to the water's edge, as if half afraid that the hills



VIEW IN SEYMOUR NARROWS.

above might swoop down on it unawares. Beyond this channel, lies "Seymour Narrows," still more winding, and with an added danger in the strength of the current, which is estimated at fourteen

knots per hour. So powerful is it that captains time their passage so as to reach this point at the hours of extreme flood or extreme ebb tide. We happened there at the latter time ; yet even then our steamer heeled over several degrees, as the current, after rushing in small whirlpools around the rocky headlands, struck fair under our bows and along our keel. After several experiences of this sort, no one grieved when the little light-house at the north end of the channel suddenly loomed up from behind a ridge of hills on the right ; and just as the sun set behind the curving Vancouver hills, we steamed into the broad waters of Johnstone Straits.

CHAPTER II.

THE PASSING OF THE DAYS.

A GREAT many people find delight in wandering through ancient church-yards, deciphering the moss-grown inscriptions on crumbling tombstones and musing on the mutability of human life,—its hopes and fears, its achievements and failures. If such had formed a portion of our fellow-passengers, the next day would have proved a “red-letter day” in their history, and given them pabulum for months to come; for it brought us our first sight of a native cemetery, beautifully situated beneath the hills surrounding Alert Bay. The “Si-wash” (as the native Alaskan is called) takes delight in gaudy colors while alive; and if to these artistic displays one adds some design that is positively hideous,—something that would cause the beholder to swear that the Medusa’s head or the faces of “gorgons, hydras and chimæras dire” were chaste and beautiful as a Venus or Aphrodite by comparison,—his native taste would be abundantly gratified.

Perhaps it is something of the same feeling which causes their more civilized neighbors of the world—the “fair sex”—to see beauty and grace in the latest malformations depicted in fashion-plates of recent date. However this may be, the Si-wash gives his dead the same privilege accorded to the living; and as the defunct cannot habilitate himself, his friends do it for him. Strips of colored cloth, flags, and all manner of outlandish decorations adorn the lowly graves, and are as certain signs of a cemetery, wherever met, as the rubicund nose of the confirmed toper is of the grave of buried manhood. At this particular cemetery, also, some artist, whose name I cannot pronounce (having never heard it), has designed a monstrosity in the shape of a wooden eagle (as “wooden” in its attitude as in its material part), perched upon the back of a whale or seal. Perhaps I was not well enough versed in ichthyology to decide exactly what sort of creature it did represent. Perhaps, also, it was some prophetic instinct of the “Behring Sea question” animating the carver. Whatever they were, there they stood, mute tribal totems that seemed as if they were the spirits of the olden days, still guarding the dust of

those of whose faiths they were the crude emblems and delineations.

With the coming of the evening, we approached Queen Charlotte Sound, at the north end of Vancouver, opening into the Pacific; the first long swell of whose waters reached us soon after dinner. And, strange to say, many of our passengers became suddenly "tired," and wanted to lie down. The "lassitude" which sea air begets is never more strongly shown than when there is a slight sea on; everybody wants a rest.

We had hardly left the shelter of the hills, however, and steamed out into the Sound, when a genuine Alaskan fog came up, the first we had encountered. These fogs are like nothing one meets at home. With us, they come drifting, silent, swift, gradually thickening until surrounding objects gleam dimly and damply; here and in Alaska they come rolling down from mountain-top or across the waters in massive walls as of smoke from factory chimneys, wreathing, twisting, coiling as they approach, until they whirl around you, and the air becomes in an instant chill and vault-like, reminding one of death and the grave, and producing sensations akin to those one feels in the

vaults of the Capuchin Monastery in Rome, among the skeleton remains of the brethren decorating wall and ceiling; and everybody was very glad to exchange the damp, chill deck and rugged face of nature for the warmth and light of the Topeka's cabin and the genial countenance of our courteous captain.

The steamer turned back and anchored in a little harbor, which was evidently the crater of a volcano at some long-past period—Port Alexander, the pilot called it. We steamed up into the circular harbor, past a peak of rock jutting up sheer and precipitous in the centre of the "crater," to within hardly a hundred yards from the shore, or rather *edge*, for there is no shore, properly speaking; yet even there, eighteen fathoms of cable were run out before the anchor "took the ground." What a harbor! Rugged, beetling, fire-scarred crags towered for hundreds of feet above us on all sides, save by the narrow channel wherethrough we had entered. Above, the wind roared and the fog swept in clouds of smoke-like vapor; below, we were as quiet as though in our own homes. What secrets the depths below us hold who can tell? Even the government charts are exceedingly

inaccurate as to topography and soundings; one may approach the rocky shores—almost all being nearly perpendicular—to within a hundred feet, and yet find soundings of thirty to thirty-five fathoms. As one of our passengers remarked, “If all this water could be drained off from Sitka to Victoria, we would have one great, big Yosemite Valley.” And a Yosemite over four hundred miles long, at that! What a chance for some De Lesseps! If canals failed, he might turn his hand to erecting a dam here and there along the Alaskan



IDOL OF HAYDAH INDIANS.

coast, and give us another “National Park.” But none will ever view those depths, nor learn what lies beneath those waters; nor will mortal compu-

tation of time measure the ages since Nature turned her hour-glass and allowed the Ocean God to usurp the throne of the Fire God.

The next morning the sun rose bright and clear, and between the sunken reefs that lie scattered everywhere through the Sound the Topeka held her way northward. From here on the scenery changed. Instead of high, rolling hills, covered with a magnificent growth of timber, all interspersed with rich meadows, the earth becomes rocky and cragged; verdure disappears, and in its place come short, stubby trees, their roots taking but weak hold of the mossy, spongy soil that edges the many water-ways leading in all directions, like the canals and dikes of Holland and Belgium. The mountains become sharp and pointed, all showing distinct volcanic action; and nestling in their dark depths are dozens of little lakes, whose waters fall in silver dashings over the precipices that bound them into the blue waves below.

In Queen Charlotte Sound, also, we sighted our first school of whales, from thenceforth to be our daily companions, until we became so accustomed to their appearance that sparrows around our dwellings would be more liable to excite our curiosity

and surprise. Nor were these pygmies, but huge cetaceans sixty or seventy feet in length, some so far off that only the dark line of their backs and the vapor made by their "blowing" revealed their presence; others would rise within fifty feet of the steamer, their wet backs resembling big barrels, and leaving an oily deposit on the surface after they had descended. Occasionally one would "breach,"—that is, stand on its head, with its tail and perhaps half its body out of the water, for a minute or two, and then suddenly plunge below with the speed of an express train. Man is not the only enemy of the whale, however. The captain had no part in arranging it, but nevertheless those whales gave us a gladiatorial contest before we were through with them, with the wide waters for the arena and a sword-fish for "retiarus," while one of the whales performed the part of swordsman. For fully five minutes the waters near us were in a whirling commotion, the sword-fish often leaping entirely out of the water in order to stab his ponderous antagonist, but every time to be foiled by a swift movement on the part of the assailed whale, which spouted as vigorously as a stump-speaker, and thrashed the waves with his huge tail something

after the manner of a camp-meeting exhorter. But suddenly the commotion ceased; either the whale had been pierced in a vital part or the sword-fish had given up the contest. The waters settled down, and we began to look for other excitements. The captain informed us that such a sight was a usual one in these waters. And just here let me insert an event that happened a few days later. We had been admiring the large growth of timber, when some one exclaimed "Look! there's a whale ashore!" Sure enough, a mighty splashing, followed by the heave of a long, black body close along the beach, gave token of some unusual event, and we all watched eagerly. The whale did not seem to move; yet presently another splash was seen and heard, and another whale "bobbed up serenely from below" beside his mate. It seemed as if a family of whales were having a reunion there. But rounding a point of rock that lay between them and us, we saw it all. Loggers were sending timber down the "chute;" the "whales" were only logs, and their splashings were only the waves made by their ingress to the waters. Our "biological" passenger was seen no more until late in the evening.

We were rather surprised after dinner to be called to service, and a hasty consultation of the almanac informed us that the day was Sunday; so we accepted the invitation, and attended divine worship by the Rev. Dr. C——, of Tacoma, a fellow-passenger, whose sermon was, however, broken by numerous exits at every new view of interest or beauty.

Monday dawned; and at last our desires were gratified, and we had reached Alaska. Not a very imposing or interesting part of it; only a little custom-house on Mary's Island,—a neat little two-story structure; but it looked quite "home-like" to see our own stars and stripes floating from the flag-pole. Here we embarked the custom-house official, Mr. M——, whose chief duties seem to be to travel on the steamer, play cribbage, and impart information to the passengers; and his great courtesy made him warm friends during the days we were together. Another "duty" I recall is to see that no one brings any sort of liquors into the Territory. One of our passengers who landed at Juneau was obliged to leave his pocket-flask aboard until he should rejoin the steamer. On the ground that though a man

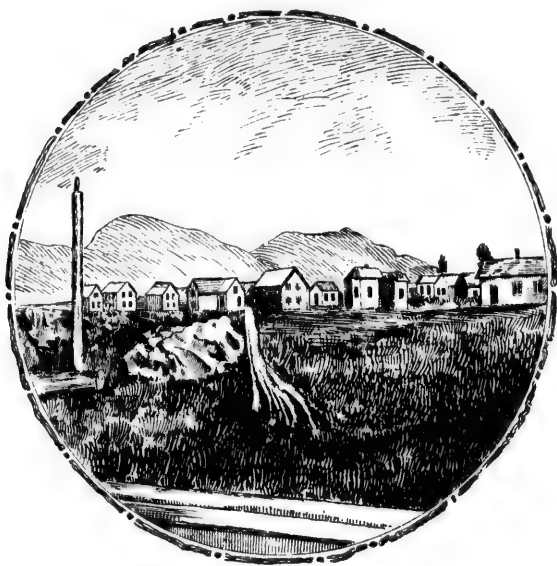
may *think* harm to another, so long as he *does* no overt act of injury he is blameless (which is an excellent legal axiom), the residents of Alaska may, and do, manufacture all the liquor they want, but they must not *import* any. The idea is recommended to Governor Tillman as a change from State dispensaries, and surely it is a good "protective" system. I saw but one intoxicated man in all Alaska, and he was not a native.

CHAPTER III.

A PAUSE IN FLIGHT.

THE evening was approaching when we left Mary's Island, a little gem in its ocean setting, and a few hours' steaming brought us beneath the shadow of a mighty volcanic peak, cleft in twain at the top, and strongly resembling Vesuvius in general appearance, save that its sides are covered with trees and foliage, and have none of the grim blackness of the lava-clothed Italian giant; nor does the smoke and flame of Hadean fire roll and flash from the summit, for the crater is now a silvery lake, whose waters escape in a dashing cascade down the rocky pathway to the waves whereon we float. Nestling at its base, to the northwest, lies the little village of Port Chester, on Revillagigedo Island, otherwise known as New Metlahkahtlah. This is the first place in Alaska where we were allowed to land, and the steamer had hardly anchored a quarter of a mile from shore, when we were surrounded by dozens of native

canoes, some propelled by mere boys of ten or twelve years of age, managing them with the



NEW METLAHKAHTLAH.

dexterity of men, and evincing a long acquaintance with the instability of their craft. Everybody wanted to be first in getting a sight of the natives, but when one's *nostrils* become acquainted, curiosity is abundantly satisfied. Eye and ear may go further, but the nose—ah, no! Our own boats were lowered, and we entered and were rowed ashore over waters so glassily clear that the

bottom at eighteen feet was plainly visible, covered with rocks and boulders, with myriads of fish swimming hither and thither. The natives remained on board, their canoes watched over by two or three boys. These canoes are long, round-bottomed, high at bow and stern, with a decided and frequent tendency to overturn at no provocation, as I personally discovered later on. They are propelled by paddles ranging from three to five feet in length; sometimes roughly made, but very often handsomely finished and painted. The natives are pleasant-looking individuals, with round, fat, chubby faces and very decided Mongolian features, and were dressed in rough but neat costumes of the civilized races; sometimes wearing high hip boots, but more frequently barefoot. Not all the natives one meets, however, dress thus "fashionably." Up near Wrangel, and from there northward, the combinations of color and style would give the ordinary tailor and ladies' dress-maker an attack of apoplexy; and their manner of wearing certain articles of clothing appeals rather to the sense of the ludicrous than to that of the "eternal fitness" of things. Evidently tastes differ in different lands.

The salmon cannery is the chief business in Port Chester, and annually seven hundred and fifty thousand cans are shipped from this port alone. But the interesting part of the town is the Mission, established by two Scotchmen, Mr. Duncan and Mr. McKay, to whom must be given credit for not only evangelizing but civilizing the natives. On addressing one of the Si-wash in "Chinook" (the name of the intertribal language), I was surprised by being answered in as excellent English as would be spoken in any city in the States, the old man taking evident pleasure in his proficiency of what was to him a strange tongue. I will admit also that his English was probably much better and purer than was my "Chinook." No one would think that, only a few years ago, these very men, now so polite and pleasant, were mere savages, who were driven out of their former home by British red tape, who went on the war-path and marked their steps with blood, and who finally, under the instructive leadership of the gentlemen above named, have renounced barbarism, adopted civilization, and have built the little town wherein they now live. But such is the case.

We left the wharf and wandered up the main "street" toward the mission buildings and the church, which stand near the centre of the town. The "streets" (so called) are wide and wet; a row of planks constitutes the sidewalk, and, in spite of many large ditches, the whole surface of the ground is spongy and soft. Many beautiful wild flowers grow beside the foot-path; but unless one can reach them from the board walk, he would be wiser to leave them alone. One of our party tried to gather some of the flowers, but only succeeded in sinking in the mud over his shoe-tops. The houses are pretty little structures of frame or logs. One of the most interesting features of their church is a painting on the western wall, done by a young native, representing the visit of the shepherds to the infant Christ. This is a wonderful exhibition of atavism; for though an Oriental subject is treated in a Christian style, yet the faces of all the personages—even the baby itself—have the identical traits and lineaments of the faces carved on the totem-poles,—large eyes, broad mouths, and general "wooden" appearance. The mission rooms are large, commodious and well ventilated.

Leaving the mission, we strolled along the beach, among throngs of dirty, mangy, half-starved dogs, and incidentally came across a native laundry. Soap, wash-tub, and the other articles which *we* deem necessities in such cases are all superfluities to the native. Any ditch that has running water therein furnishes them a good tub,



PADDLE AND WAR-CLUB, NEW METLAHKAHTLAH.

and that is all that is needed. A large mat, made of woven grass and reeds, is laid in the bottom of

the ditch, the clothing (very much soiled) is piled thereon, and a barefoot "klutchman" (woman) steps into the middle of the pile, and laboriously wades around until they are a little damper, probably, but certainly no cleaner, than before the operation. European washing houses, so numerous along the rivers in the various towns, might learn a lesson in cleanliness from the "klutchman's" way of doing things. No ironing is necessary; the sun does that for them. If "cleanliness is next to godliness," I suggest the advent of a few more missionaries and a dozen cases of strong soap, on hygienic grounds, if not religious ones.

But the Topeka had hoisted her sailing flag,—a signal for "all aboard,"—and taking leave of our new acquaintances, and also taking a fine stone battle-axe which I purchased of one of the older natives, we re-embarked, and were soon steaming away for Wrangel, but with eyes still turned back to the lights and shadows illumining the towering peak guarding the little semi-civilized charge beneath its feet.

The proprietors of this steamship line have evidently a full appreciation of the needs of the inner man. Five meals a day, with pie for three meals,

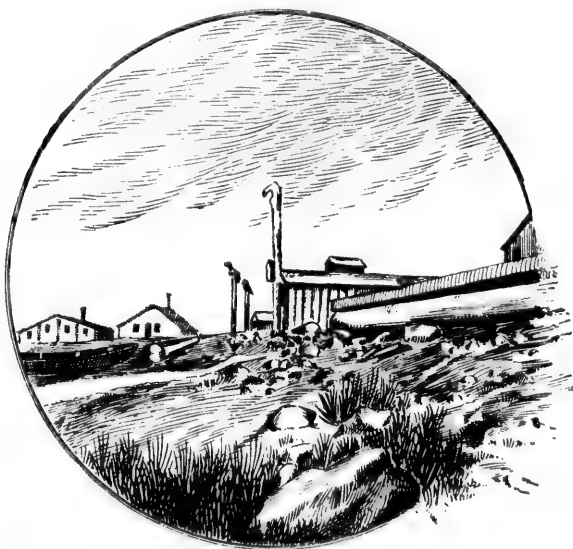
and fresh salmon and halibut; these are but a few of the delicacies prepared for our supper the night we left Port Chester. Who blames one of our passengers, if an overweening fondness for pie caused a dearth of that article before we reached Sitka?

CHAPTER IV.

IN AN OLD NEST.

WHEN I awoke the next day we were in Fort Wrangel, for many years the most important town in Alaska, being situated near the mouth of the Stikeen River, the centre of the gold-mines. Even now the waters for many miles are colored and darkened by the detritus washed down by the Stikeen from the many "placer mines" along its course. Wrangel is named after an old Russian baron who first built and fortified it as a military post. Two of the old block-houses, with their second stories overhanging the lower, still remain to show the style of architecture necessary for those days of savagery and carnage. We hurried through breakfast in a manner calculated to highly astonish our digestions (if we have any left, after "McGinty's" plentiful combinations of good things) and hastened ashore to see the sights of this most curious village. Wrangel, since the gold fever has

been cured (not the Keeley gold cure), has quieted down into a place whose chief attractions are its totem-poles; its chief features mud, rain, and fog; and its chief business to cheat the innocent traveler. The totem-poles are the main sights of the town, and every one is well worth a visit, even those across the little inlet to the south, where the



VIEW IN FORT WRANGEL.

burying-ground is located. These totem-poles are pillars of wood from twenty to one hundred feet high, some carved for their entire length, others only at the top, with all manner of fantastic shapes,

chiefly heads, though the eagle (whose head, originally that of a *bald* eagle, has been so long exposed to the weather that mosses and small plants have taken root thereon, and give his birdship the appearance of a cat in the presence of a big dog), the whale (which is placed in front of the United States government buildings near the wharf), and the bear (with his footprints on the pole up which he is supposed to have climbed) are all fairly represented. The most curious thing about them is their history. They are not the work of those who now claim them; when, where, or by whom made, or for what cause, is unknown. One very old Si-wash told me that he remembered, when a boy, forming one of a party who brought a totem-pole from a far-off spot—he knew not where—and planted it with great ceremony in front of the palace (?) of one of their chiefs, where it still remains. These totem-poles represent the genealogy of the person before whose house they stand; and being a sort of *dii penates*, it is almost impossible to buy one. The natives, however, spend their winter evenings manufacturing imitation ones in *fac-simile*, to sell to summer tourists. The male line is never traced on these poles; only the mater-

nal line is recorded,—a peculiarity of many savage tribes, and one much easier to follow up; for the male Alaskan is a strict monogynist—one wife he may have, and no more; but the native female is alarmingly polyandrous, and her numerous husbands live together on the best of terms. The totem-poles are also used as repositories for the ashes of dead chiefs; and in one I found a hollow place about six inches deep, filled with fragments of bone and fine dust, very likely the remains of some old, long-forgotten ruler.

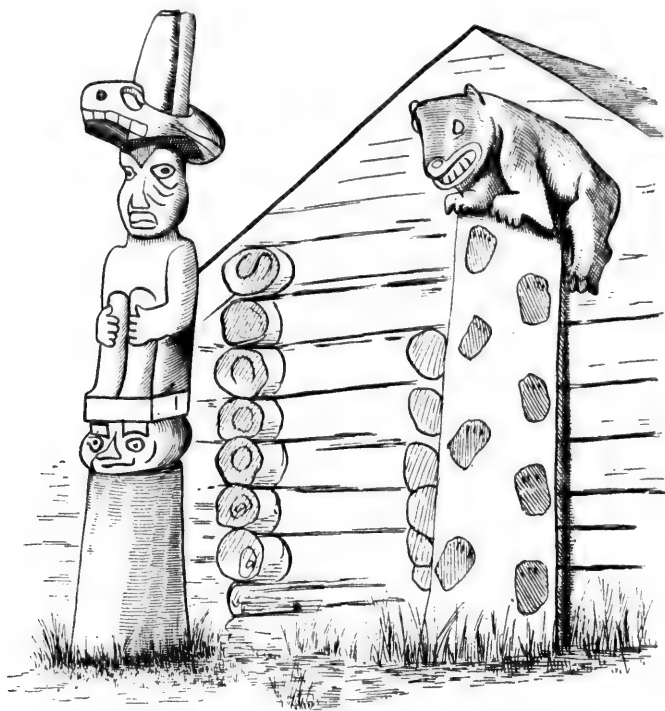
If you do not object to wading in mud over your shoe-tops, Wrangel will be a source of wonder and delight; and as a small space of beach, between the huts of the natives and the straits, constitutes the main “street,” and a board walk up to the government buildings is the other “street,” one cannot well lose his or her way. While wandering around, one of our party happened to pick up a handsome “potlatch” club, lying partly concealed in the grass. He bore it off in triumph, to the chagrin of three others, who formed the exploring party. But hardly had that war-club gone a quarter of a mile, when the possessor (?) was approached by a Si-wash, who politely informed him that something about

him was objectionable to the native gentleman's ideas. A colloquy in Chinook on the one part and English on the other followed, with very little being understood on either hand, until one of the party suggested, "Try him with a quarter." The hint was acted upon, and the native, his face wreathed in smiles, patted the "potlatch" club and pointed to the finder, bowing. We had no more accusations of petty larceny to contend against.

It began to rain, and we returned to our steamer, only stopping for a few photographs of some of the handsomest totem-poles. They are not to be met with north of Wrangel, but here they are plentiful; and, surrounded by the mist and rains so copious in this region, they seem grim sentinels of the nations who once revered them, and whose monuments they will still be, long after their present worshippers have mouldered in the earth.

Wrangel is the only place where you can purchase the Alaskan garnet, — large, well-colored gems which the natives bring down to the wharf and sell at the low rate of two for a half-dime. One can also buy souvenir spoons of wood, carved by the natives, bead-work, seal-skins, medicine-men's charms, and, among other things, I recall a

handsome rug of the down of eagles' breasts for one hundred and twenty dollars! But the traveller



TOTEM-POLES, FORT WRANGEL.

will find equally as handsome curiosities at Juneau and Sitka for less than half of what they cost in Wrangel; and always, in Alaska, buy from the natives as much as possible; they have a better assortment and are much cheaper than the stores.

"If you don't see what you want, ask for it," will bring anything that it is possible to obtain in this country.

We were curious to see the interior of a native house, so we opened the door of one of the largest and entered without presenting our cards. An old crone, whose age might have been over a century, hobbled toward us with some wooden spoons for sale; but as we only wished to *view*, and not to buy, we declined. In the middle of the room, on a dirt floor, was a fire of wood, the smoke finding exit (finally) through a hole in the roof directly over it. Along two sides of the room were raised shelves, on one of which a girl was lying, while the other sides of the room, and the rafters, were hung with skins, old tins, old clothing, and all manner of wrecks and relics. The odors of decayed fish and filth were almost overpowering,—a skunk would have been fragrant by comparison,—and we left.

We boarded the steamer and stood westwardly, through Duke of Clarence Straits, and reached Wrangel Narrows by dinner-time. These Narrows run for fifteen miles, the channels winding in all directions; one moment our passage seemed to be barred by some huge black peak just ahead,

when suddenly a turn of the wheel would bring us to a channel to the right or left, past some grim mountain giant of rugged aspect and wild grandeur, or else by some low-lying island, whence flocks of wild geese, swans, and solitary eagles rose slowly, as we steamed past; occasionally the howl of a wolf on the surrounding hills or the crackling underbrush under the stealthy step of a panther or lynx would mar the perfect stillness as we glided past along our forest-shadowed pathway leading ever northward.



TOTEM-POLE, FORT WRANGEL.

One peculiar appearance in these waters must be noted,—the wonderful reflections. Peaks twenty miles away would be

reflected in waves almost at the steamer's side; and often we were deceived into believing that native villages or canoes of strange design were resting against the water-line, when it was only a reflection of some strange freak of nature in the formation of roots, stumps, and trees. These reflections are perhaps as wonderful in their way as are the mirages of the Great Salt Lake and of the lonely valleys of the "Sangre de Cristo" range.

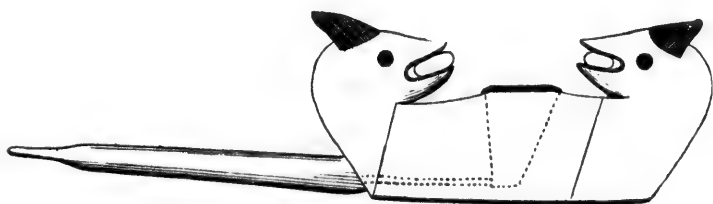
For the last mile of the narrows our attention was attracted by a long range of broken, jagged peaks lying to the east, an occasional glimpse of whose snowy crests could be caught between the islands hampering our course. The steamer suddenly rounded a low point of woods on our right, and there, before us, was a glorious panorama, unsurpassable, probably, anywhere on the continent. To the left—the sapphire of the seas a fitting setting for its emerald glories—towered a massive tree-clad mountain apparently two thousand feet high; beyond, and at a distance of three miles, lay the waters, shining brightly under the lights of sunset, the distant shores white as snow with thousands of ice-floes and small bergs; while behind all, stretching as far as the eye could reach, their

crests rough, fire-torn, and riven by long-dead volcanic action, their sides wrapped in a winding-sheet of snow, lay the giants of the Alaskan range, "ancient as the stars that o'er them shine." But their crowning glory,—like the wreath to the bride,—rendered more impressive and beautiful by the tints of pearl, lilac, and pink reflected from their icy surfaces, still and peaceful in their grim defiles, through which they slowly wander to the waves below, lay the glaciers,—Baird's, Le Conte's, and Patterson's. Too awed to utter more than an occasional whisper, we stand and gaze, drinking in with eager eyes the fulness of beauty spread before us, until the shadows gather form and substance, the gray fog settles down over the picture, and night falls upon us; yet not before we have photographed that scene upon memory's sensitive plate,—a "positive" in color, rather than a black negative,—to keep forever.

CHAPTER V.

TO ICY BARRIERS.

THE next morning brought us to Juneau, the largest town in Alaska, situated on the slope of a high hill, which would be a mountain anywhere else than in this land of huge excrescences upon the face of nature. Beyond the town (which, with the exception of a few stores where one may buy curiosities, has nothing particularly interesting



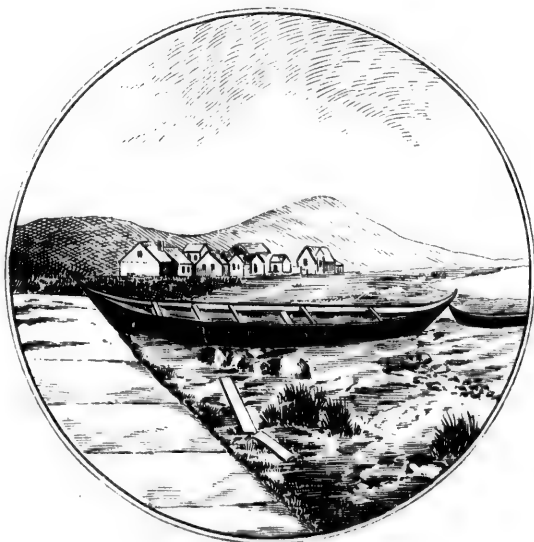
CARVED PIPE.

about it) one finds a beautiful little glen, down which rushes and tumbles "Gold Creek," and a few miles beyond lies the "Basin," where fine specimens of "free gold" are mined. The "Bear's Den," situated above the town, was formerly one of

the best-paying mines in the vicinity. Just across the channel from Juneau, and connected with it by a little steamer which runs every half-hour, is Douglas Island, whereon are the Treadwell gold-mines, using the greatest number of "stamps," or gold-quartz crushers, in the world,—two hundred and fifty of them, all working at once, and making so deafening an uproar that a man may shout his loudest with his mouth close to your ear, and yet you will be unable to distinguish one word. The annual output of this mine is about eight hundred thousand dollars' worth of gold. The ore is mined immediately back of the mills, and is conveyed by small steam cars to the crushers. After being ground up to an almost impalpable powder, the ore is carried down upon inclined planes covered with mercury, over which a constant stream of water runs. The mercury combines with the gold to form an amalgam; the other portions of the ore are washed down by the water, to be afterwards used in the "roasting furnace," and the amalgam is pressed into balls and then sublimed, when the gold is left in the little crucibles and the mercury collected for future use. The smelting-rooms, roasting furnaces, department for chlorine treat-

ment, assay-rooms, etc., are not open to the visitor; but by the kindness of one of our passengers, who was formerly in the employ of the Treadwell Company, I was permitted to see the entire works, and was agreeably entertained by several of the officials connected therewith. A promising vein of tellurium has lately been found near the mines.

After leaving Juneau, we visited Loring, and saw the wreck of the ill-fated steamer Queen,



NATIVE CANOE.

which went ashore during a gale some time ago; and then steamed to East Bay. Here we visited

a "sweat-house," as it is called; the native idea, I suppose, of a free dispensary or hospital. The "house" is of logs, chinked with mud, its contents being a pile of stones and a hole in the ground. The method of treatment is the same for all diseases: fill the hole with water, heat the stones and roll them into it. The steam soon fills the house, and when the half-boiled patient finally emerges, he runs down to the water's edge and plunges in. As a *permanent cure* for most diseases, it ranks very high; but such treatment is apt to mar the future usefulness of the patient, besides aiding to increase the occupancy of the native cemetery.

An interesting feature, also, to be seen here was a "salmon wheel." This wheel was made with several scoops of net, and was turned by the action of the current. The wheel is placed in the channel-way of streams and left to its own devices. The unlucky salmon, ascending the stream to spawn, is caught up by the scoops and dropped over by the action of the wheel into a trough leading ashore, where the salmon cannery come the next day and pick up as many as they wish, leaving the rest to die. Extinction of the salmon

is only a question of a few years, if the United States permit such methods of catching them to go unchecked.

We passed Admiralty Island at night, and the next morning found us in Icy Straits, at the entrance to Glacier Bay. But the morning fog lay thick, like a veil upon the face of some lovely woman, hiding what lay beyond, and only allowing the imagination to wander at will, and people the unseen realms before us with forms of grace and beauty that nature has rarely attempted.

The purser and myself spent half an hour in shooting at seals, otters, and other marine forms, which occasionally appeared dimly through the shadowy thickness; and as the fog gathered closer and darker, our hopes of seeing the great glacier fell below zero; for the captain said that unless the fog lifted by nine A.M. he would be compelled to go on to Sitka and leave the glacier unvisited. But by 8.30 A.M. the fog did lift—over a magnificent view that surpassed even the mental paintings we had conjured up. To the right lay the rough moraine of the Muir Glacier, stretching northward to its progenitor, its slopes green with foliage and with fresh strawberries in profusion. To the left

stretched league after league of snow-capped mountains, while afar the peaks of La Perouse, Crillon, and Fairweather gleamed white and forbidding, yet, siren-like, beckoning to their snowy breasts. No traveller has reached Fairweather, I am informed; and if he did so, the icy arms and bosom of the hard-hearted giantess might lull him to an eternal slumber. It struck me that if a man contemplated suicide, he might attempt the ascent of those mighty peaks, and make a daily record of his travel; it would help science amazingly, and not be quite so "vulgar" as a pistol bullet in the head.

From Icy Straits—beautiful but weirdly gruesome—we steamed slowly into Glacier Bay. The waters were flecked with ice-floes and even bergs of small magnitude "thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks of Vallombrosa," yet the air was balmy and warm as our spring-time. While the ice-floes were scarce, we steamed along fairly well; but when they began to average from sixty to a hundred feet square, and covered every hundred yards of water, the captain "slowed down"—and then gave us an example of magnificent seamanship. Perched in the "cro' nest," his glasses always to

his eye, the captain sought out the clearest : ssage through the thousands of floes, and yet many a shock would quiver through the steamer, as she struck one of the smaller bergs, causing some of



A BERG FROM THE "MUIR."

the passengers to ask if the purser had any "nerve tonic" on board. If we had collided with any of the largest in our course, the probability is that we would have become speedily better acquainted with the soundings than are the United States government charts. Up we steamed until admiration gave place to wonder, for before us there towered a

gigantic ice-river two miles in breadth and three hundred feet from the waves that thunder at its base to its rough, honey-combed summit,—the Muir Glacier! Closer still the steamer approached its polished face, the roar of falling pinnacle and the splash of its descent into the waves coming ever and anon to our ears, until we anchored about a mile below the glacier, white as the superincumbent snows where it had long been exposed to the air, yet bluer than Italian skies (which, by the way, are not one whit bluer than our own) where some newly-made berg had fallen from its æon-old resting-place in the icy arms and upon the frozen breast of its glacier-mother—not a deep sea blue, nor yet a pale, washed-out shade; but clear, fervent, vivid; caught, perhaps, from the skies and seas of the long-gone tertiary days, before the ice age began its long carnival upon the world-wide summer-tide of the green earth. While we watched, before the anchor had hardly taken ground, a heavy report came booming over the waves, and a mass of snowy ice-pinnacles on the face of the glacier came tumbling and crashing into the waters beneath,—a fitting discharge of nature's minute-guns over the grave of the ages

dead and buried in the old glacier's icy record-chamber. A few moments more, and, with another heavy report, we saw a huge mass of ice three times as large as our steamer slowly slide downward and outward from the surrounding ice-mass. Its speed quickened, and then suddenly it toppled sheer over, striking the waters with a roar that would almost drown Niagara's hoarse thunder. A few score of "little pieces," weighing a hundred or two tons each, flashed downward like silver arrows, and all disappeared beneath the surface. We waited fully two minutes, and then, still seeing nothing of the new-made berg, almost gave up all hope of seeing it rise, in spite of the captain telling us to "Look well ; for he was a big one, and when he does come up it will be worth seeing." And it was. A sudden swelling was visible in the waters, a series of botryoidal formations, like soap in boiling, disturbed the serenity of the wavelets, and when it had attained a height of twenty or thirty feet, the mighty berg shot upward, with a roar as of a Kansas cyclone, from the centre of the mass, in a column of deepest sapphire,—up and up for fully a hundred feet above the glacier (itself three hundred feet above tide water),—only

to fall back with another crash into the depths, to repeat the operation of rising and falling to a degree not even to be witnessed in the New York Stock Exchange, until finally it lay rocking gently on the swell created by its own labors, to drift out with the current which runs ever seaward from the glacier, until it mingles with the waters whence it sprang in the dim, unknowable past.

By this time the boats were lowered, and everybody crowded in to go ashore, or rather to climb the moraine and from it to reach the top of the glacier. The glacier has not as yet achieved notoriety as a means of rapid transit, but its deliberate movement gives ample time to view the scenery. A few years ago it extended fully a mile below its present frontage, and the "dying glacier" on its western side was one of its regular branches; but the recession of the ice-walls has gradually separated the main stream from its smaller branch, and now the "dying glacier" lies alone and is fast disappearing. We scrambled up the slippery side of the moraine and found ourselves on an undulating plain of wet mud and pebbles, our foot-path being a board walk laid over the surface. Originally the board walk was continuous, but now (one

year after being placed in position) it is tilted in all directions, sometimes at an angle of sixty degrees,—sideways, endways, in some cases overturned. When one of the party asked the reason, we were astounded to learn that this apparent surface of earth and stones upon which we were walking was in reality the glacier itself; and in a few moments we were shown a “gash” through the crust which, on inspection, proved that beneath us lay solid ice two hundred feet thick, and the tilting of the walk was due to the erosion of the under surface of the ice and its consequent fluctuations above. Scrambling up little ice-cliffs and down the dainty little ice-valleys, we at last reached the clear, smooth (comparatively speaking) crest of the main glacier.

Words can but inadequately describe the view. Stretching for a hundred and seventy-six miles away into the interior, its distant portions lost amid the mists and rocks surrounding it, with its five branches resembling a giant hand outspread, lay the ice-river. To the east and west towered grim, dark mountain-peaks, while below us lay the blue waves of Glacier Bay, flecked with white bergs, amid which our steamer looked as small and insignificant as certain Senators appear to be on the

floor of Congress at present. The difference in the comparison lies in the grandeur, sublimity, and beauty of the glacial forum,—details lacking in the “forum civile.”

Close beneath the east wall of the glacier a turbulent, muddy stream gushes forth, caused by the melting ice beneath the main body of the glacier, and which irresistibly bears onward with it the bergs, floes, and trees broken from or carried down by the huge ice-river. Several of our party climbed fully a mile beyond the spot where *we* decided to pause and wait (having a desire, on our part, for further “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”), and, on returning, reported the surface to be very rough and honeycombed, with many huge crevices here and there, stretching downward too far for the eye to sound their depths.

But we were not allowed to remain longer on this fairy shore of Wonderland, and, rejoining our steamer, with many a lingering glance at the cold-hearted giant, we steamed slowly “backward o’er the shining track,” with the glacier sending its parting salutes after us, as if the powers and forces of nature were hurling their ammunition and thunders from the crumbling ice-fort against the un-

availing weakness of frail humanity for daring to intrude upon the "Temple courts where Time holds rudest sway." After all, the glacier has a very cold and unapproachable manner, and does not allow one ever to become very intimate with his affairs.

CHAPTER VI.

TO WARMER CLIMES.

UNDER a warm, bright sun, we steamed slowly back through the white and azure bergs dotting Glacier Bay, down past Icy Straits, and so to Killisnoo, which we reached late at night. The next day—Sunday—we were all ashore early, for we heard that there would be services in the Greek Church here,—one of the three in the United States,—and we all, I think, were rather curious to see the form of worship which composes the national belief of a large quota of the world's civilization.

The most prominent attribute of Killisnoo is its *smell*,—not a large variety thereof, but one long-continued, everywhere-permeating odor of dead fish. The presence of the factory of the American and Alaskan Fish Guano Company is certified to long before the eye takes cognizance thereof. Here, as at all other Alaskan ports, the wharfmen, stevedores, loafers, and inhabitants gen-

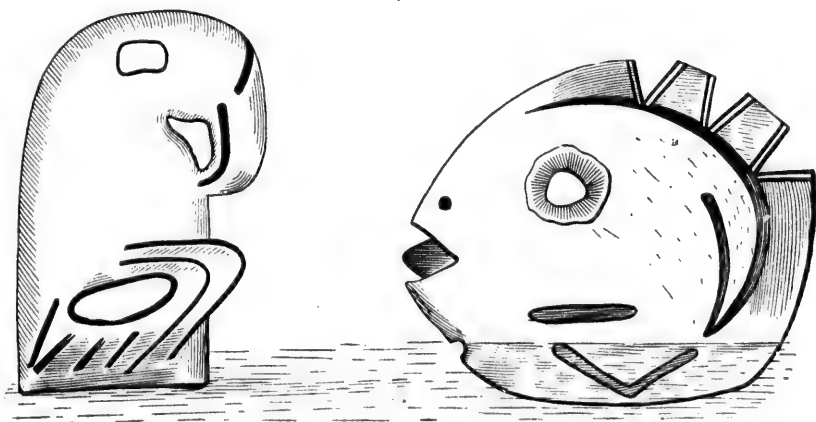
erally are native Si-wash, with a very slight sprinkling of American and European (chiefly Russian) faces. Here, too, I saw my first "widow." Ignorance sometimes causes bad blunders, and when I first saw this woman, with one-half of a very dirty face painted in deepest black, I imagined she was a "belle" who had chosen that method of adding to her charms. I speak advisedly there, for *anything* that would alter the natural appearance of most of these women could be considered a decided improvement on nature. But, on investigation, I found that, like the crape veil of her civilized sisters, it was the badge of mourning universally adopted among the Haydahs, Thlinkets, Yakutats, and other native tribes. Strange, is it not, that the sombre shadows of the tomb shed their blackness over the faces of both civilized and uncivilized people?

Another caprice of the natives, which I first observed here and often thereafter in Sitka, was the "labret." This is entirely a matter of ornament, and is generally confined to the women, though I saw a few men indulging in the practice. A hole is bored through the under lip, something after the manner of the Botocudo Indians of Brazil

(than whom not even the most ill-favored Si-wash is more homely), and in this hole is inserted whatever the fancy of the wearer dictates. On one occasion I noticed three or four teeth, evidently procured from the mouth behind them, all inserted into the one hole, which must have measured half an inch in diameter. Usually, pieces of carved and painted wood or bone fill up the aperture. As a rare method of adornment it stands alone; may it long continue to be worn only by those now using it.

There is one other noteworthy thing about Killisnoo, and that is the presence of "Saginaw Jake," claimant to the "throne," and a "hiyu-tyee" (which may be translated "big gun") in his own estimation, which he cheerfully and frequently expresses, and a nuisance in the opinion of everybody else, which *they* are ready to give with equal cheerfulness and frequency. "Jake" really has some claims to greatness. He was formerly the "delait-tyee" (chieftain) of the tribe, and succeeded in stirring them up to war against a very insignificant portion of the world called the United States, with the result that he was soon in irons and "under hatches" on board a paltry little craft

called the Saginaw (whence his title of "Saginaw Jake"), belonging to the very small nation referred to, and was held some time as a hostage for the good behavior of his people. On being finally released, he found himself, like his modern representative, Coxey, minus his followers, and generally "out of a job," and his "palace" and position usurped by another aspirant for royal and military honors. Unable to exercise his warlike powers, "Jake" erected an enormous eagle on



STONE IDOLS.

what he termed his "skookum-illahee" ("palace" would hardly suit the modest building), with an escutcheon and a few lines of doggerel, evidently composed by some wag on board the Saginaw, in

which his claims to chiefhood were asserted. His rival, not to be outdone, painted a still handsomer "coat of arms" (?), announcing *his* claims in other verses, and nailed them over his door. The two rivals live peacefully within a few steps of one another. "Jake" weighs at least two hundred and twenty-five pounds, and is correspondingly fond of liquids whose strength only goes to increase the weakness of the imbiber. Recently his wife concluded to "break with him." Knowing his great credulity and superstition, she locked him out of doors one night, and told him the ghosts of his ancestors would strike him dead if he dared to enter the door again in an intoxicated condition. The bibulous ex-chief built a ladder and climbed in through the second-story window (there were no windows on the ground floor), and then his faithful spouse told him that death would equally result if he left the house. Thereafter, for nearly two weeks "Jake" remained a prisoner in one room, and, as his wife had gone off with another husband, he was in danger of starving before help reached him, the neighbors fearing divine chastisement if they interfered. "Jake" would be called a "dude," if that word were incorporated into Chinook. He is the

possessor of more suits of clothes than an actor, and in the course of one morning I saw him appear, first, down on the wharf, in a collection of rents and patches that would make even a scarecrow look naked and ashamed; then he showed a United States naval uniform (the worse for wear); soon a stalwart, brass-buttoned, blue-coated policeman, with a star as large as a breakfast plate on his breast, appeared; it was "Jake." We went to the Greek Church, and lo! "Jake" was there, acting the part of precentor, arrayed in a black Prince Albert reaching to his heels and a "stove-pipe" surmounting his abnormal cranium. I will not describe the church; that in Sitka is much more ornate, but the general plan is the same. The services were in Russian (I presume), and were interspersed by some very fair singing by the congregation. There were no seats; everybody stood, the men on the right, the women to the left. In prayer, every one knelt. The sermon was delivered in Russian or some other language, and translated by a small boy into the native tongue. On entering, the worshippers cross themselves twice in good Catholic style. There is an American school near the church, which is

prosperous and doing good work. While we were attending services, another portion of our passengers went fishing and secured a boat-load of halibut, weighing from one hundred to one hundred and fifty pounds each. Think of it, ye followers of Izaak Walton!

Like every other town in Alaska, a large part of the population consists of dog, and a *very mean* dog at that,—a gaunt, sharp-eared, savage, wolfish variety of cur, whose great aim in life seems to be to get into a fight. But simply stoop as if to pick up a stone, and even Nancy Hanks could not catch them. They also amuse themselves fishing. Half-starved by their owners (when they have any), they subsist on fresh fish; and when the tide goes out, leaving them in the many sinks and puddles along the shore, the dogs may be often seen dashing in and out of the shallows, to emerge at last with a fine, fat fish, which they proceed to eat raw.

Leaving this malodorous but charming village (taking with me a very handsome stone idol purchased from one old "klutchman," besides other curios), we slowly steamed away toward the sunset,—toward Sitka,—toward the end.

Our way lay through Peril Straits, though why

they should be so called is a mystery. It may be that, like Ulysses and the syren singers of the olden centuries, the first explorers dreaded lest the beauty around and about them should cause them to cease their wanderings and forget their homes, lingering



IN PERIL STRAITS.

amid its glowing mountains and wave-crested waters; content that here, at last, man had found the entrance to a later Eden.

The straits are studded with beautiful, tree-covered islands, beyond which tower the snow-capped peaks of mountain ranges whereon the foot of man

has not, nor ever can, leave its traces,—peaks glowing with pearl and pink and lilac as the sunshine showers its gold upon them,—and we gaze until it seems a world of enchantment, and we ourselves but spirits. The St. Lawrence, with its boasted “Thousand Islands,” cannot enter the lists with Peril Straits for grandeur and sublimity. Each mile brings other and newer vistas before us, each seeming fairer than that which preceded it, until one is bound to confess that *all* is so perfect that there can be no better and no best, no fairer and no fairest. The land on our left, which appears part and parcel of the continent, is really Baranoff Island, whereon is the chief city and capital of the Territory,—Sitka.

I think there was but one disappointed individual aboard, and he surprised us all. He had been examining the features of the country during the whole trip, and as he had said little or nothing about scenery, we expected wonderful language replete with poetry when utterance did come. And this is what he said, in broad Scotch, “Well, I’m ——— if I ever saw a poorer country for sheep-raising.” The Bible will furnish the missing word. Instead of admiring the beauty about us,

he was true to his shepherd instincts. The "ruling passion" is as strong in the breasts of the children of the Grampian Hills as it is in those whose pathway in life leads through Wall Street.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LAST MIGRATION.

As we proceeded, under a golden evening sky, the hills gradually opened before us, at last exhibiting a broad strip of water stretching to the horizon, which our pilot said was the Pacific; the huge mountain towering to the north-west, with the upper half of its grim sides a deep brick red from the lava, ashes, and scorïæ that incrust it, and its lower half green with the foliage of meadows and the leaves of forests, is the recently extinct volcano Edgecumbe. In the general features surrounding it, it bears a close resemblance to Vesuvius; though the red upper portions of Edgecumbe are quite unlike the blackened, fire-embattled crags and clefts of its European brother. Soon the heavy report of a cannon, echoing along the surface of the wide waters, announced that we were approaching Sitka, and in a few moments a turn to the left brought us in sight of the Alaskan capital. Scattered along the water front to the north and east of

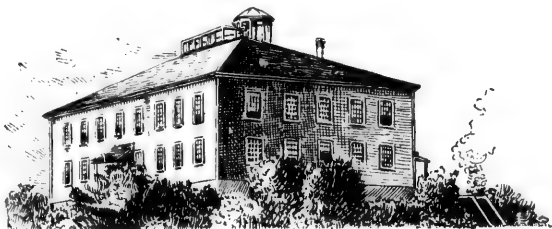
the town are the cabins of the natives, while just beyond the wharf is the "plaza," as we would call it were we in Mexico, with the government buildings and stores on the right and the barracks on



SITKA HARBOR AND EDGECUMBE.

the left. Directly in front is the Greek Church. A small eminence near the water's edge, behind the government buildings, is capped by a rough-looking structure, not at all imposing in its general appearance, but which has the honor of being the only genuine "castle" in the dominions of "Uncle Sam,"—Baranoff Castle. *Barren* Castle would be

more appropriate. Unfortunately for tourists, within the present year this historic building has been reduced to ashes, and the only remains of it are probably in the possession of sight-seers and relic-hunters. Beyond the town, to the east, situated on the little bay which bounds Sitka on the south, are the buildings of the Presbyterian Mis-



BARANOFF CASTLE, SITKA.

sion, now under the charge of Rev. Sheldon Jackson; while between the town and the Pacific lie a hundred little islands,—volcanic waifs, orphaned by the death of the subterranean fires within the breast of Edgecumbe, only twelve miles away; and against their tiny rock barriers the ocean breakers dash ceaselessly, sending their musical rhythm in harmonious melody across the mile that separates them and us.

As soon as the gang-plank can be thrown over, we disembark to see what we can ere daylight

closes. Baranoff Castle being nearest, two of us (the "kodak fiends," of course) climbed the steps leading up the little hill to the entrance of the castle. Built during the Russian occupation, it was formerly a place of splendor; now it has a dilapidated, melancholy appearance, and would be an addition to a New York tenement-house exhibit. Why did not Chicago take up the "slums" of the American cities, and help along the cause of corrective moral principles in this direction? Baranoff Castle and a few Si-wash shanties would have made a good nucleus. I am not going into details concerning Baron Baranoff and the transfer of the Territory to the United States, nor of the ghosts, nor Lady Franklin, nor the hundred other tales that every one knows. The rooms in the front of the castle were locked, and we could not enter; but on the south side of the house we found some windows (minus the sashes), and with little difficulty climbed in and started on a tour of inspection. We found nothing either above or below stairs, except some gaudily papered rooms, with handsome old cornices, decayed flooring, and numbers of spiders. The rooms are small, with exceedingly low ceilings, and I can but hold my peace regard-

ing the very slight vestiges of architectural beauty here and there. They consist only of panels to certain doors, or a handsome niche or bit of dentil now and then. The view from the cupola, however, is very fine, embracing the Sitkan archipelago and the mountain ranges far in the interior. Everybody registered his name and address in the *Herald* and *Alaskan*,—modest little newspapers, with very little paper and less news in their general make-up,—and soon thereafter returned to the Topeka.

It seemed odd to be on deck at ten P.M. and find the glow of twilight as deep and vivid as it would be at home at eight. I was called out of my room by one of the passengers, in the “wee, sma’ hours,” to see my first arctic aurora. We are all familiar with its appearance in temperate latitudes; but few can realize that the broad, glowing belt of color, flaming with pink, yellow, and green lights, changing shape and shade while we gaze, scintillating as if clouds of first magnitude stars were gathered into one long-extended Milky Way across the heavens, is the same substance with whose appearance we are so familiar. For fully half an hour did we watch

the glowing, shining ribbon bound across the dark forehead of the night, until suddenly, in the space of half a minute, not longer, it paled and faded and passed into nothingness, leaving earth, sky, and waters hushed and darkened, as if in the presence of the death-angel.

The next morning our first thoughts were for the native quarter, and thither we turned our steps. We had not yet satiated our curiosity regarding the usual sights and sounds of the Si-wash villages: rows of salmon hanging on long poles in front of the little cabins; huge black cakes of "muk-a-muk" (dried sea-weed pressed into blocks, and which takes the place of bread) lying on the damp earth, and used as a "door-mat" equally by dog and native; canoes in all conditions of dilapidation,—these and a dozen other strange sights were as new to us still as a clean recruit would appear to "General" Coxey. The houses are numbered, but in rather a novel way,—by hundreds, and not by units. The second house from the wharf is numbered 200, the twenty-fourth house would be 2400, the very next one would be 2500, and so on. If the settlement contained more than the very small num-

ber of houses actually in existence (about sixty), the above plan would be confusing, even to one who had mastered the tariff question. Here dwells "Princess Tom," an aged crone who attempts to inveigle the unwary into purchasing articles of utter uselessness at immoderate rates. Near by is the "illahee" of "Sitka Jake," the most noted and noteworthy of Alaskan carvers in wood or metal. From him or his brother one may purchase beautifully ornamented souvenir spoons of solid silver, carved by himself, at prices that would break a "penny bargain counter" in any civilized country. You can buy anything here from the natives,—odd V-shaped fish-hooks carved of wood, paddles, canes,—everything that the Alaskans use ordinarily, and that is illustrative of their daily life, can be purchased everywhere. At the extreme north end of the village several natives were busily engaged in completing the great war-canoe which formed part of the Alaskan exhibit at the World's Fair.

By the time we had completed our tour of the native quarter we were ready to visit the Greek Church; and, retracing our steps, we soon came to that edifice. The building is erected in the form

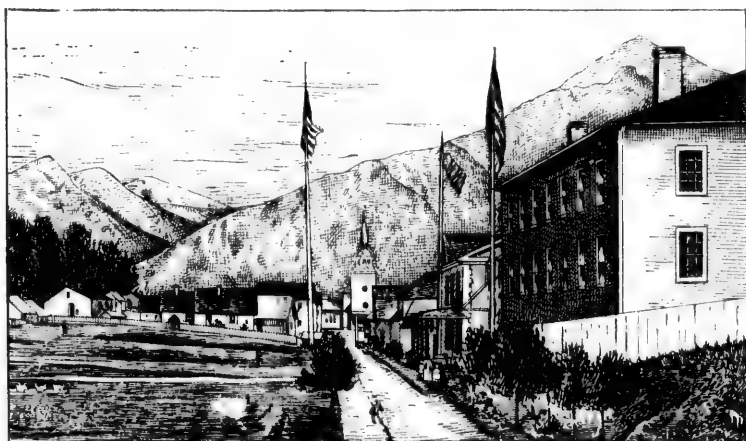
of the Greek cross, and is surmounted by a tower containing a town clock (which marks one certain fixed hour with its single hand) and a chime of bells, sent from St. Petersburg when the Territory was still a Russian province. Within, the scene changes; instead of the rough, boarded exterior, we find a light, airy, beautiful little structure, adorned with paintings, some of them of rare merit, and claimed to be works from the hands of those great artists of the Eastern hemisphere who have added so much to the galleries of Antwerp, the Louvre, Dresden, and the Italian palaces. There was one method of adding to (or, in my opinion, detracting from) the beauty of the pictures in several cases,—a method up to that time unknown to me, but with which I have since become familiar in several of the European galleries,—I refer to the covering up of every portion of a picture with repoussé sheets of gold and silver, save where hands, face, and feet appear. It is rather incongruous to expect a tourist to admire a work of Raphael, when the only parts of the painting visible are the *flesh* tints, the rest being hidden. If the gold and silver be solid, it may enhance in a slight degree the “bullion” worth of a picture

in a massive gold frame; but lovers of Raphael would much rather see the glorious, deep-tinted canvas of his master-hand than the tawdry accompaniments of gilt and silvered covering that hide his handiwork.

We were not permitted to enter the "sanctum sanctorum" (although *one* of our number, at least, could have told of hidden mysteries within only those whose life is guided by the plumb, square, and level—even by the three "T" squares and the sword and buckler of the "red cross"—can explain); but our guide, Mr. George Kostrometinoff, brought out for our inspection the various "relics" therein. They consisted of articles whereof Moses and the Aaronic priesthood were ignorant: magnificent garments of the clergy, every one embroidered in gold thread, on groundwork of "purple, scarlet, and fine linen," with mitres of royal dimensions, one of them containing an emerald two and one-half inches high by one inch broad, with a gold crucifix inlaid. If it happens to be genuine, it is worth a fortune; if glass (as I suspect), worthless. Here also are the "bridal crowns" placed upon the head of bride and groom who join life's army under the banner of the Greek Church. They are orna-

mented (?) with imitation gems in glass, of rubies, sapphires, emeralds, etc. These priestly garments are similar in style to the robes that one would be shown, while wandering through the Vatican, as the regal robes of long-dead—almost forgotten—Popes and archbishops.

The paintings are the most interesting features of the church. On the right and left of the nave are two little alcoves, or chapels, dedicated to special saints, in which are the choicest works of



VIEW OF SITKA.
(Permission of "Youths' Companion.")

art. Except for the three altars, the interior has no other ornamentation than the pictures, flambeaux, and other accessories of priestly worship.

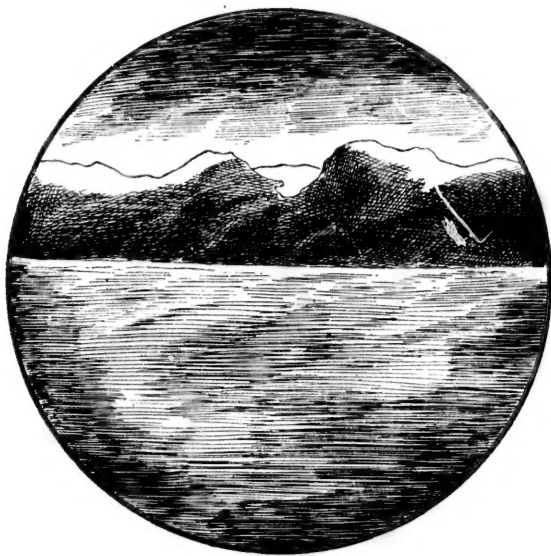
Leaving the church, we went eastwardly through the town and along the shore of the bay until we reached the buildings of the Presbyterian Mission. Mr. A. E. Austin is at present in charge, and the study into which we were ushered bears witness to the taste for beauty and curios which Mr. Austin possesses. The floors are adorned with handsome fur rugs; the walls and shelves are ornamented with choice specimens of native workmanship interspersed with works of standard merit. The students are all bright, intelligent young men and girls, very different from their own people who dwell in the native quarter, and who have not, as yet, adopted civilization and its adjuncts. The various workshops and museum contain much that is interesting, exhibiting the advance made by the students over their normal semi-civilized state. The tools most used are the broken blades of knives, old ends of worn-out chisels, and remnants of other implements, which are fixed into wooden handles, bound with rawhide, and seem to do excellent work in the hands of their owners. In the carpenter-shop was a handsome door, representing devil fish, reindeer, whales, and other totemic symbols, which a boy about twelve years

of age was making as a part of the Columbian exhibit.

A walk of about half a mile along the shore and through the dense green woods brought us to Indian River, a turbulent little stream which dashes down its rock-strewn pathway in swift endeavor to reach the quiescent waters at its mouth. A rustic bridge spans the stream, which is not over sixty yards wide. The chief sight, however, was not the beauty and peace of the scene, but the thousands of huge salmon flapping around in the ripples, and all intent on migrating to the head-waters of the river to spawn. I rolled up my sleeves, stepped from rock to rock until near the middle of the current, and, stooping down, in a few moments I had caught several salmon two feet or more in length,—caught them with no other weapons than my own hands,—as they passed up-stream. It was a novel experience in fishing. Many of the fish had large gashes on their sides from the sharp edges of rock with which they had come in contact.

But this was our last day in Sitka; the approach of sunset found us hastening on board; and soon, amid the waving of hats and handkerchiefs, we

steamed slowly out from the islet-filled bay, turned our backs upon grim Edgumbe, and were finally started safely on our homeward way. The captain, however, did not intend us to leave Alaska without at least a glimpse of one other of its mighty ice-rivers,—the Davidson Glacier. It was about five



CHILKAT BAY.

o'clock the next morning when I was awakened by a loud rap at my door, and a gruff voice shouted, "If you want to see the glacier, come out; we'll be passing it in a few minutes." The speed with which I (and probably every one else) dressed that

morning was astonishing. On leaving my state-room, I was met by a dense fog,—probably the gloomiest, most dismal sight I ever witnessed. Through the coiling wreaths I occasionally had a glimpse of some grim, black cliff, which was speedily swallowed up in smoke-like vapor. Hurrying to the upper deck, I found my fellow-travellers gazing out to the left, and in a few moments the fog broke and revealed the Davidson Glacier in all its majestic proportions. The waters beneath our hull are those of Chilkat Bay; to the right are sheer cliffs and precipices from seventeen hundred to twenty-one hundred feet high, and perpendicular from base to summit; and upon their rugged tops lie snow-banks from one hundred to five hundred feet in thickness. To the left lies the fan-shaped mass of the glacier; not so long as the Muir, but exceeding it by fully a mile in width, and of an equal height. Its face, however, does not impress one as does the Muir, for its terminal moraine obstructs the view. In the Muir, the frontage is directly in the waves; in the Davidson, it ceases where the moraine begins. Yet, in spite of this, when one sees it for the first and last time in his life, wreathed around by “coiling

clouds that melt like fume of shrines that steam," with a gray, stormy cloud overhead and the gloomy rocks and gloomier waters around and about it, it leaves impressions that cannot fade, any more than the giant rock-nurses that have watched over the glacier from its infancy in the by-gone ages of earth's history to its manhood—aye, and will watch its empty cradle long after the icy heart has melted and disappeared—will pass like dreams and visions of the night. Then the fog closes down, ghostly and solemn, and the Davidson Glacier, Chilkat, the rock cliffs, vanish from our sight. We turn away mournfully, as if some dear friend had left us, and silently we go down to the usual routine of steamer life.

So we glide on, backward to the scenes visited so recently, speaking the steamer *City of Mexico* on her northward trip; southward, until fair faces greet us instead of the scowling visages of the Siwash; until summer-tide takes us by the hand and leads our thoughts away from ice-rivers and gloomy snow-fields; until the past fades and the present comes to cheer and bless us, and Alaska—golden, sunny, fair, muddy, gloomy, stormy, contradictory Alaska—seems more a fairy dream—a realization

of the mythic Hesperides—the lost Atlantis—the fabled Eden—than a reality ; and not only a part and parcel of this little planet, but also—our country !

THE END.